

Why We Fought in Charlottesville: A Letter on the Dangers Ahead

By **CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective** - August 17, 2017



I am one of the thousands of people who confronted Nazis and white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia last weekend. I am a blue-collar person, with a job, family, and responsibilities. I would have preferred to do other things with my weekend. However, I had to ask myself: *If these people are allowed to run roughshod over this town, what will they do next?*

"We would have been crushed like cockroaches if it were not for the anarchists and the antifascists... They saved our lives, actually. We would have been completely crushed, and I'll never forget that."

-Dr. Cornel West

***"I MIGHT ADD THAT THERE WERE NOT MURDERERS ON BOTH SIDES—
BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY MY POINT."***

No, I did not behave peacefully when I saw a thousand Nazis occupy a sizable American city. I fought them with the most persuasive instruments at hand, the way both my grandfathers did. I was maced, punched, kicked, and beaten with sticks, but I gave as good as I got, and usually better. Donald Trump says that "there was **violence** on both sides." Of course there was. I might add that there were not murderers on both sides—but that's not really my point.

I would like to ask a different question. What would have happened if there had *not* been violence on both sides? What would have happened if there had only been violence on *one* side?

On the night of Friday, August 11, 2017, I saw something that I never thought I would see, and that I hope I never see again: 500 Nazis and white supremacists marching across the campus of the University of Virginia while police did nothing, surrounding 30 counter-demonstrators who were holding hands around a statue of Thomas Jefferson, and beating them with torches while calling them "nigger" and "boy." By the end of the night, it was clear to me that the "Unite the Right" march had been organized for the express purpose of killing people on Saturday.

Permit me to quote a post from a clergy person in Charlottesville at length, because it correctly explains what happened on Saturday morning, and why. There are countless other narratives like it online.

"A note on the Antifa:

They are the reason Richard Spencer did not speak today. They are the reason the "Unite the Right" march didn't happen. They strategically used violent tactics to incite the Nazis to violence, such that the governor declared a state of emergency before noon. Before the "Unite the Right" rally was scheduled to begin.

One could argue this meant Nazis dissipated into the streets faster making it less safe, but let's be real: Nazis have been making these streets less safe for a long time. They would have been out and about soon enough with or without the antifa.

I was with a group of clergy committed to non-violence today. We did our part. We bore witness to the pain and hatred in this city. We provided pastoral care/support as needed, especially during traumatic violent acts. This was our determined role going into today. Yes, some clergy risked injury and arrest to stop the Nazis. They formed a blockade at the entrance, but they were overpowered by the Nazis. The police did not view us as threatening enough to shut things down, because again, we were no there to threaten.

The antifa strategically incited enough violence before noon to make the police declare it illegal to gather in Emancipation Park. Through this strategic violence they effectively made a previously legally permitted Nazi rally, illegal.

We may not agree with each others tactics. We may have had different goals, but if you're looking to praise people specifically for shutting down the "Unite the Right" rally, praise/thank the antifa. Not the clergy and not the police."